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AGC of America
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA
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July 7, 2016

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Education and the Workforce Committee
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act,

Dear Chairman Kline:

The Associated General Contractors (AGC) supports H.R. 5587, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. Career and Technical Education is very important for the construction industry. A September 2015 AGC member survey on workforce shortages showed that 50 percent of contractors report the current quality of programs like Career and Technical Education (CTE) are below average or worse and that reforms are needed to make these programs more effective.

AGC supports reforming and reinvigorating the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and H.R. 5587 provides those needed reforms through better alignment, better reporting, increased work-based learning, promotion of industry recognized credentials and increased federal investment.

The bill aligns education with local and regional economic needs. The alignment includes flexibility for states on how they select and fund high-quality training programs, as the most successful engagement with employers varies widely from region to region. The states reporting on how they align and consult with employers will provide an ability to evaluate the success of programs across the country.

The bill also promotes work-based learning. AGC views work-based learning as an essential element of effective CTE. The bill defines work-based learning that recognizes the varying arrangements used across industries, especially the construction industry, and local education authorities should assist in facilitating work-based learning opportunities. The sustained interaction between students and industry professionals in real workplace settings are the best environments to foster a career in the construction industry.

The bill takes steps to spur the development and acceptance of industry-recognized credentials, as they are a proven method to distinguish applicants who have the requisite skills for working in the construction industry. In addition, given the higher graduation and job placement rates of career and technical programs and the expanding demand for construction jobs, the increased

funding and additional flexibility will make it easier for school districts to expand their career and technical program offerings.

Reauthorization and reforms to CTE through H.R. 5587 will help build a strong and skilled workforce, but it must be part of a larger legislative plan for preparing the next generation of skilled construction workers. AGC looks forward to working with Congress on this bill and other vital workforce training legislation that the construction industry needs today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey D. Shoaf", written in a cursive style.

Jeffrey D. Shoaf

Senior Executive Director, Government Affairs